SEVENTEEN YEARS IN THE UNDERWORLD

WELLINGTON SCOTT

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INTRODUCTION BY
LYNN HAROLD HOUGH

THE ABINGDON PRESS
NEW YORK CINCINNATI

INTRODUCTION

THE two of us were sitting in a large park in an Eastern city, one beautiful summer evening. As the rich afterglow of the sunset turned to twilight and then to dark, my friend began to talk about the old furtive days in the underworld. He told me how in many an American city he had stood before some house of an evening when the shades were not drawn. Within he would see the father and the mother, and the happy little children, and all the bright light of home. He would turn away abruptly and walk into the dark, trying to forget it. He could never have a home like that.

Somehow there flashed upon me that night such an intimate sense of the tragic loneliness which a man can know in the underworld as I had never felt before.

Two years later I stood in the home of this same friend who for so many years had

been a social outlaw. He had fought his battle and won. He was happily married, and his wife and he together were meeting life with quiet strength and courage. A little girl had come to them. I held this tiny baby in my arms as I pronounced the great old words, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." A great light was in the eyes of the father, and the mother's eyes shone with the same gladness. The furtive man who had walked away in the dark trying to forget the sight of a happy home was replaced by a strong, capable citizen, a proud father, in a happy home.

I first met this friend of mine—Wellington Scott he calls himself in this narrative—in a certain State penitentiary. It was in the old days when stripes were still in evidence, and with the prison pallor on his face, and clad in the uniform of the institution, there was no mistaking the fact that he was under sentence. But even then there was something incongruous about it all. The powerfully built frame did suggest deeds which

required strength and daring, but the face, ready to light up with friendliness and kindly humor, the eyes ready to brighten with hearty good comradeship, the whole bearing, despite a certain embarrassment at meeting a stranger at that place and under those conditions, suggested a man who might make a great deal of life, and who might mean much to his friends. As an old pal of his in the underworld said to me at a later time, "It never seemed that Wellington Scott belonged there."

It did not take us long to become friends. We looked each other in the eye. There were a few words of straight, honest talk, and we had found each other. After that day I kept in close touch with him.

I watched his fight for a straight life when he came from the institution where he was confined. I came to know him with an increasing understanding. He had hard things to meet. He felt the tug of the undertow of the old life. But he held to his new purpose.

His unusual powers of observation, his

capacity for thought, and his gift of expression made the following narrative of absorbing interest. The reader will come to have a new understanding of the forces which drag boys down, and of the underworld which waits for them with wide-open doors. He will understand better how to deal with the boys in his own home, his own Sunday school, and his own community, when he has read this revealing document. The whole problem of the prison and prison reform will appear in a new light. And the reader will come to think of the prisoner, not as a wastrel, but as a man who has lost his way.

The iron entered into the soul of the man who wrote this little book, and sometimes the intensity of his feeling is felt in his writing. Do some of his terrible memories make him "see red," and ought some of his vigorous statements to be taken with a grain of salt? I do not think that those familiar with prison conditions under the old regime will be inclined to that opinion. Donald Lowrie's My Life in Prison may well be

read by the man who thinks that this is an overdrawn picture. That striking volume Within Prison Walls, by Thomas Mott Osborne, blazes with an ethical indignation much stronger than any which finds expression in this book. That Wellington Scott is entirely sincere, that he is level-headed and not inclined to extreme views, and that he believes he has given a fair account of conditions, I know. I am ready to vouch for this narrative, not as the report of a judicial commission, but as a sincere and revealing document, in which, with the endeavor to be both candid and fair, the author gives us many significant chapters from his life. When the judicial appraisal of the old regime in prisons comes in, it will be a more terrible arraignment than this book by Wellington Scott.

The crook is waiting for a friend. He has amazing capacity for loyalty. No man in the world is more appreciative of genuine friendship. The ways to prevent men from returning to prison are many. One of the most important is by providing every man

who comes out of prison with a friend—human, red-blooded, hearty in all his relations, ready to enter into the life and see out of the eyes of the man who has come forth to try his fortune in a none too friendly world.

At this point the doubter and the cynic may lift their voices. How do I know that the men will respond to friendship? The answer is ready. I know because I have seen the response. That, however, is another story. Some day I may try to tell it. Now it is time for Wellington Scott to speak for himself.

LYNN HAROLD HOUGH.

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE

I WAS born thirty-three years ago in one of the small cities of an Eastern State. The family from which I came was well thought of, and what it lacked in the possession of money it made up in respectability. My life up to the fifteenth year was that of the usual boy. I believe I was a little more studious than the average youngster, spending much time and finding not a little pleasure in fitting myself for a future career. I stood well in school, being at that time one year from high school.

My mother died when I was about six years of age, leaving the care of nine children to my eldest sister. My father, a wage-earner, did not remarry. The home atmosphere was all that it could be, no bickering or quarrels ever marring the quiet of the house.

My father for as long as I can remember had been nearsighted. Whether it was hereditary or not, I too soon developed that condition of the eyes. I have always been supersensitive about that defect in my vision, and at the time did all that I could to prevent the fact becoming known at home. This defect of vision I shall dwell on at more length hereafter, as I believe it to have been one of the contributory causes of my entering the underworld.

The neighborhood in which I lived up to about my fifteenth year was just that kind one would expect to find around the home of the prosperous workingman. About this time in my life, however, an undesirable class of people began coming in, and the older neighbors began seeking new homes. My family followed the exodus and moved into one of the established suburbs of the city. I shall call the place Rosedale. Rosedale was like unto a strange town to me, and I found it lonesome. I was a youngster then, craving companionship. I had left all of my boyhood friends five miles away in the city

below. I knew no one, and I needed the fellowship of a youngster of my own age. Whatever sports I entered into I entered as a stranger. I went to school and missed sadly the presence of my mates of the city. I was diffident to an extreme, and to make matters worse my father decided at this time that I should wear eyeglasses. That was before the time when glasses became popular, you must remember. I hated the thought of putting them on. I feared the derision of the boys with whom I must associate. I felt them a drawback in my search for companionship.

How well I remember the day I first put them on! I went to school, and the jibes of the boys and the half-concealed smiles of the girls made life miserable for me. The poison of melancholy crept into my heart. I would not have any of their proffered friendships, and the rancor in my heart kept me alien from their fellowships. I drew myself, as it were, into a shell. I made a pal out of solitude and out of silence. I suckled the poison of discontent. Can you

imagine the life of a boy like that? The life of a lad is incomplete when it lacks the joys and pleasures found in companionship with other boys. These are a necessary part of his life, essential to his well-being and vitally important in the formation of a good character.

About four squares distant from my house there stood a car barn. Opposite this car barn was a pool room, where, for two and a half cents a cue, one could knock around the balls to his heart's content. To this pool room my steps gravitated. I remember the first time I entered. It was an evening of the middle winter; the cold was bitter and a cold sleet driving down from the northwest made life miserable on the outside. I hesitated a while before entering, then, summoning up my courage, I went in. My! but it felt good. A hot stove showed red in the background, the odor of tobacco smoke struck strong upon my nostrils, but, above all, the good-natured chaff and jokes of those at play. This I thought was fellowship of the highest order.

No one gave me more than a passing glance as I entered, except the proprietor, who was all smiles. He wished me a pleasant evening, mentioned something about the weather and went on about his work. I soon was made to feel at home, and some minutes later found myself busily engaged at my first game of pool. That pool room soon became the Mecca of all of my goings out. Initiations into the mysteries of crap, poker, and other games of a strictly gambling character soon followed. Before long I had acquired a passion for gambling that knew no limit. A year passed in this environment gave me pals a plenty. These friendships, irretrievably given, led into the complex shadows of the underworld.

CHAPTER II

BEGINNING A CAREER

I DO not remember my very first act denoting criminal tendencies. The act which first brought me into the clutches of the law must have been the culmination of a passion nurtured by similar acts, but on a much smaller scale. A weakening of the will power, perhaps, by the pool-room environment of twelve months or so, was back of it all. Preceding the act which brought about my arrest I know I committed many other acts of petty thievery. Like yesterday that arrest comes back to me. Imagine a department store at the holiday season; throngs of shoppers crowded here and there; salespeople busy with fussy customers; floorwalkers watching for crooks. There by the jewelry counter two boys in their teens stand watching and waiting, a small hand reaches

out to a case of rings, nervous fingers lift a "sparkle" from its velvet bed, two boys turn from the counter and follow the crowd into the street outside.

Many an anxious hour followed the commission of that first big act. A thousand times I wished that ring back in the store. I saw a detective in every face, a prison in every dream. Back to the pool room we went with our prize. It was soon disposed of. At the price for which we sold it we could have sold a million.

One night, about a week after this event in my life, I was called to the door of my house. I found a stranger who asked if I were a certain party. I answered in the affirmative. Straightway he proceeded to tell me that I was under arrest. Of course this was what I had all along been expecting, and so it wasn't very surprising. It was the culmination of my fears, and I was sort of dead to any emotion. This detective was good to me. He was a great big fellow with a pretty good heart.

Next morning at the station house the firm

was inclined to treat me leniently. The ring had been recovered, and on the promise of my father to look after me, and on my own promise to behave in the future, the judge dismissed the case.

I soon found the old environment calling me in tones which I could not resist. I slipped back again to the old pals and companionships. The ice was broken. I found each succeeding act against the law much easier of commission, until the habit became formed. Crime to the professional thief is nothing more or less than habit. That is why the reforming of such is so difficult. I lost all sight of the morals. The right or wrong of an act never enters into the mind of a criminal. His senses in this respect have become atrophied. Each act is a business proposition, considered from a business standpoint, and measured only by dollars and cents, and the opportunity for a clean "getaway."

I did not confine myself to shoplifting. I soon graduated from this class into something bigger. I remembered the teachings

of school days, the copybooks wherein were facsimiles of checks, promissory notes, etc. I soon put this learning into criminal practice.

Suggestion, while perhaps not a direct contributory cause of crime, is nevertheless so intricately interwoven with the big causative agencies that it is mighty difficult to say what part it does play in the formation of the criminal. That it plays a big part there is no gainsaying. A mind lacking will power is like a sheep—ever willing to follow a leader. If that mind possesses criminal tendencies, a method of crime is easily suggested by simply reading of other crimes. I know not whether it is pertinent to the query or not, but one of the big facts about the men in the underworld is that nearly all are inveterate readers of the daily press.

Whatever part suggestion may have played in the lives of other men in the underworld, it was a potent factor in one of the crimes of my early career. The proprietor of the pool room which we made our rendezvous had a relative who suddenly

died. Wishing to show his affection for the departed, he sent me to purchase a floral piece. Being short of change, he wrote a check for ten dollars and bade me give it in exchange for the wreath. From this incident in the life of legitimate business was suggested an illegitimate use of the same idea. Why could I not do the same thing? I reasoned. The more I thought of it, the more certain I became of its feasibility. I tried it out and it succeeded beyond all expectations. This success hastened me on to the inevitable day of disaster. All crooks are possessed of a little more than their due share of vanity; my success in the new line puffed up my pride considerably. I was only a kid, I reasoned, doing a man's work in the underworld. Of course there was no big money involved, but the money there was looked awfully big to me.

CHAPTER III

PERSISTING IN MISDEEDS

EVERY lane, the philosopher will tell you, has an ending. Mine stopped abruptly. A check of mine was returned to the one who supposed me a Carnegie. Having a good description of me, he lost no time in notifying the police. Some ten weeks later, I walked into the arms of a waiting policeman. I knew him well as an old friend of the family, and besought him for their sakes to let me go. He couldn't see it that way. Of course he was sorry for me, and all that, but he had a duty to perform. I put on as bold a front as I could as he led me to the nearest patrol box. My impressions of that ride in the wagon are indistinct in my memory. I do remember, however, the sensation of weight that seemed to overwhelm me as I entered for the second time the station

house. I was held for trial and committed to jail until tried.

It was early summer and the courts had adjourned to meet again three months hence. That time I must spend in jail, unless it were my pleasure to plead guilty or unless I could arrange for bail. The latter was out of the question; bail could not be had. Friends of the family were unwilling to take the chance. Upon entering jail my mind was made up to take my punishment at once and have it over with, but in jail I met men older and abler in crime than I was, whose advice to me was to demand a jury and take a chance. They reasoned with me that I had everything to gain and nothing to lose by the experiment. I, of course, took their advice.

A trial by jury gives a pretty good chance to the crook. It takes mighty strong evidence, and it has to be very conclusive to send a man away for a term of years, and the crook knows it. The worst that he's got is an even break, no matter what the evidence. If there's a real discrepancy in

the testimony of the witnesses, a minor mistake in the identification, it is a ten to one chance in his favor. The crook, above all, knows men, knows how difficult it is to get twelve men to agree on anything under the sun, and, other things being equal, is more than willing to stack his liberty on the chance. In all my experience in the underworld I know of no man wrongfully convicted. On the other hand, I know of at least a hundred cases where the guilty have been acquitted.

Of course I do not mean to say that my experience has been the rule, but I am giving it for what it is worth. I myself was once tried for an act which I knew absolutely nothing about. The evidence against me seemed conclusive, my pals had all bidden me good-by, and I myself had given up hope. I was without money to employ first-class counsel. The State was represented by an attorney able in criminal prosecution, and this made my chances look slim indeed. I had no witnesses to speak in my favor. I went on the stand and told my story; I

testified as only truth can testify, and the jury acquitted me. My pals of the underworld called me a lucky dog. Was I lucky? Was luck the dominant factor in that acquittal? It may have been, but I have never believed it. I have a conviction, born from I know not where, that the Providence that guards the fool, the child, and the drunkard also throws a protecting arm around the innocent.

I entered jail an amateur in crime and stayed there a little over three months. In that time I learned more of the devious methods which crooks use against society than I had ever dreamed of knowing. What a commentary upon justice! What responsibility rests upon a State which makes no provision for the separation of the young and old in crime!

I mingled daily with men grown old in the underworld; I assimilated just as much of their vices as my immature nature would hold. I learned the language of the crook. The tales told were strong with the flavor of adventure. They fascinated me and I

looked up to the old crooks as men to be envied. Boy that I was, I knew nothing of their hidden life; I knew nothing of the years spent behind prison walls, nothing of the misery, sufferings, the heartaches such years entailed. Yes, I envied them. They came to be heroes, as it were, out of the great book of adventure.

The day of my trial finally arrived. I took particular pains to dress well for the occasion. Appearance weighs largely in the prisoner's favor before judge and jury. The trial was brief, the evidence against me conclusive, I could offer none in my favor. The jury retired, and after over two hours deliberation arrived at the fact that I was indeed guilty. I tell you, juries do some strange things and arrive at still stranger conclusions. My sentence was pronounced immediately, and was that I should be confined in the reform school until I reached the age of twenty-one years.

As I look back over the years I can see clearly some of the steps that led me over the line. Be it understood that I am making

no excuses for my numerous lapses of morality; I shall merely endeavor to trace some of the causes which led me into the underworld.

CHAPTER IV

EFFECTS OF GAMBLING

I HAVE already mentioned the fact that I am possessed of a defective vision. I believe, and believe sincerely, that this defect of vision is a handicap to its possessor in the legitimate battle of life. It was partly responsible in my life for my extreme diffidence, a diffidence that became in itself one of the causes which led me into the environment of the pool room. It kept me away from those of good character, from the decent fellowship of girls and boys of my own age. I do not mean to say that the defect in itself did all this, but by reason of it my nature acquired a peculiar temperament, a sort of aloofness. I have always loved a crowd. I like the life of a city with its busy folks and ceaseless rush of activity. I like fellowship, companions to talk to; I

hate to be alone. In search of these I drifted to the pool room.

I find this pool room another step in my journey to the reform school. It is my experience that while all gamblers may not be crooks, all crooks are gamblers. This passion for gambling grew strong within me; my nature was a fertile field for its propagation. Many a dollar of my ill-gotten gains has gone in a futile attempt to appease its appetite. Here lies one of the big causes that drove me on. It isn't the mere gambling itself which is so destructive to character, it is the lust for money, the passion for gain that gambling begets, the creating of a "money want" which the earnings from legitimate labor cannot satisfy; this to me is the vital evil of the passion. This "money want" eats into the will power of the man, eventually breaking it down and sending the man to the devil.

I know now that the three months I spent in jail hurried me on to the life I lived eventually. Some people will say that I must have been inherently depraved any-

how, that three months in jail could have little to do with the making of my character. Of course I do not know what my life would have been if I had never entered the jail. If, for instance, I had been paroled, or, if some one had reasoned and talked the thing over with me, might not the outcome have been different?

It has always appeared strange to me that the State should be a party to creating the evils which it is at the same time trying to prevent. This custom of herding young boys suspected or guilty of crime with older and hardened criminals is a crime against childhood. At an age when the senses are most receptive the boy should have an environment free from contaminating influences. If the aim of the State is to reform and not simply to punish him, the quicker it separates the youthful criminal from the older one, the better its chances to deplete the ranks of the underworld.

CHAPTER V

THE REFORM SCHOOL

I ENTERED the reform school when a few months over sixteen years of age. The following twenty-eight months in this institution marked the crucial period of my life. The things that I found in the school, the environment, the indiscriminate mixture of the boys, regardless of their ages or evident depravity—all these steered me toward the rocks of a wretched career. I entered the school not altogether bad, and there was still a possible chance of making me see the error of my way. I was at the impressionable age, and I believe, as I look back, that proper association, coupled with a correct method of teaching, would have molded my career into a different channel. If I had found sympathy and understanding in the teachers, if I had been given the opportunity

of mixing with boys knowing *less* about crime than I did; if I had found an honest desire on the part of the teachers to bring about reform, then my later life might have been different. I found none of these things. There were certain of the officials who had the qualifications needed, but they were of minor importance in the life of the institution and didn't count.

The school was situated in the center of the State, about thirty miles from the scene of my former activities. Consisting of about a dozen buildings, they made an impressive sight as one viewed them from their front. There was no wall about its boundaries, nothing but the level expanse of cultivated fields.

It was an afternoon of an early autumn as I alighted from the conveyance which had brought the guard and me from the station. The first impression I received on viewing the collection of buildings was that of a student looking for the first time on the school which is to be his Alma Mater. Had not the judge told me that here I

would find friends and an education to fit me for the later life? The fact that I had been convicted of a criminal offense made no difference in these impressions. I was like a curious student, anxious to know what the years would bring, and what possibilities the institution held. I entered the office conducted by my guard. He removed my shackles and I stood before the head of the institution. He greeted me kindly, gave me some words of advice and turned me over to one of the clerks.

Just a word here about the superintendent: he was a man nearing, I suppose, his sixtieth year. He had held his position for ten or twelve years, and to all intents and purposes was an ideal man for the head of such an institution. In all my dealings with him I found him an honorable and square man. In after months he used the lash on me several times, and always because he thought the offense warranted it, but never in a brutal manner. His great fault lay in not giving the institution his personal supervision, as he should have done. This duty

he left to the assistant superintendent, satisfying the conscience of duty done by an occasional round of the cottages and shops. Punishments he delegated usually to the same assistant superintendent. The law said and directed, I have since informed myself, that only the superintendent had this power. This assistant superintendent was a man of the Brockway type, a cold, cruel specimen of a man, a martinet rather than a disciplinarian. All the wrongs ever complained of there were traceable to him—of him more anon.

The institution was run on the cottage system. There were several cottages—eight, I believe, in all—scattered about the grounds, sheltering a group of from forty to seventy boys in each. These collections of boys in groups were called families. It was the aim of the officials so to group the inmates that each family would include boys of nearly the same age. This method was soon found impractical, and at the time I entered there was as much as eight years difference in the ages of the boys making up

the family to which I was assigned. This grouping has been one of the vicious faults of the reform-school systems of this country, and still exists in some of the schools of the present day.

I also found that some of the boys were grouped regardless of type or character. I found dependents, boys absolutely guiltless of crime, whose only fault lay in the unfortunate fact that they had lost their parents, mingling and coming into daily contact with boys of a naturally depraved nature. You can imagine what five years of this association would mean to such boys. These are no isolated instances. In the school at the time when I was there I know there were at least a hundred committed because of lack of homes, and these boys, through no fault of their own, were thrown by the State into an environment of degeneracy and crime. Is it surprising that the majority chose the underworld for a living?

I have read a lot about the percentage of reformations some of the reform schools of

this country are making yearly. To be frank, I doubt it. I very much doubt the accuracy of the statistics. Seventy-five per cent of the professional crooks of the country are reform-school graduates. In my belief it is a natural evolution.

CHAPTER VI

ESCAPE AND RECAPTURE

THE life of the school for the first six months or so was uneventful. I spent the time in learning the routine, getting acquainted with the boys, etc. My first punishment came when I had been there about eight months. I had been put to work in the kitchen, working there each morning before school for four hours; in the afternoon returning again to work till supper at six. The kitchen work was supervised by a woman, good and gentle, but inclined to be supersensitive about the authority her position conveyed. One morning I received a barrel of particularly fine apples, as I supposed, for the usual kitchen purposes. Having a few pals to whom apples would be in the nature of a treat, I selected a dozen or so of the largest and finest and stored

them away. Imagine my state of mind when I found out that the apples had been shipped as the special property of the kitchen overseer. Of course there was high commotion over the missing top layer, and, of course, I denied that I had seen the barrel, not to speak of opening it and abstracting the choicest dozen. It transpired that envious eyes other than mine had seen me hide them, the "stool" of the family, in fact, and he lost no time in conveying the information to the head. That night I was led gently into the punishment room, and experienced for the first time in my life the pain which sodden leather coming into violent contact with the bare skin brings. That licking was another step downward. I never got over the humiliation of that night. It made me revengeful; I vowed I would get even. I knew I did wrong in taking the apples, and it was not so much the punishment, it was the method by which I was caught and found out. That system of espionage exists and is encouraged by the officials in every penal institution I have been in. It seems that in

every collection of individuals, no matter the strata, there are always some a little more despicable and lower than the rest. These are termed "stool pigeons" by the men. I have found them, without exception, cowards at heart and with less soul than a corporation.

Soon after receiving the punishment I began laying my plans for an escape. The place had become monotonous. The routine, day after day, was galling. I longed for the outside life, for just a glimpse of the city. I wanted to mix again with the people of the outside world. Daily, at frequent intervals, I heard the long shrill whistle of a locomotive. How my heart used to beat when I heard it! I imagined the train with its cushioned seats, and I in one of them, journeying to one of the many summer resorts for a day's outing. I envied the birds as they flew above me in the free air. I wanted to get away from the sight of the blue coats and visored officials. All of my nature craved for freedom once more.

The opportunity came. In the middle

of the night my pal and I tied the ends of our bed sheets together and noiselessly slid to the ground, fifty feet below. We walked five miles to the railroad and boarded a train that took us speedily away from our former prison. It was good to be free again. The stars shone like diamonds in what seemed to me the bluest sky I had ever seen. The air was soft and cool and the rattle of the train was like music to our ears. We were bound we knew not where, contented with the fact that we were free. I have thought since then that I can imagine the feeling of a bird as it rises wing on wing in the bright heavens after a cage life of weary years.

Daylight found us in a city by the sea in southern New Jersey. I shall never forget my first sight of the ocean on that eventful morning. It was the season of summer. The atmosphere was clear as crystal, save for a glimmering haze in the distance, above which the morning sun was now sending down rays of golden color. To the far right an ocean liner was lazily

steaming along, the smoke from its funnels darkening the cast of the sky overhead. Before us a schooner, sails full set, rolled to the swell of the ocean. The dull moan of the waves as they broke against the sand-strewn beach seemed full of symphonies. Above all was the silence of the early morn, broken only by the call of the wayward gull. Since then I have seen some of the famous scenery of the world, but never have I been impressed by the beauty of nature as I was on that morning of long ago. My contemplation of the beautiful picture before me was rudely interrupted by a slight noise behind me. I turned and was confronted by one of the officials of the school, his arms outstretched before him in the very act of laying hands upon me. I tried to dodge, but the attempt was useless. In a minute he had the handcuffs on me and I was being led back again to my prison.

CHAPTER VII

DISCIPLINE

PUNISHMENTS for escaping were usually severe. I was put in what was called the lockup. Each cottage possessed one. It was a narrow closet of a room about five by seven feet. There wasn't a sign of a window in it, the door was made of several thicknesses of wood, reenforced by numerous steel plates. A narrow slit in the wall acted as a ventilator. There were no toilet facilities. There was no bed but a board, and there was no covering. My outer clothes were taken from me before entering. Can you imagine the feelings of one confined in such a place?

Each morning, about eight o'clock, the officer of the family unlocked the door, a boy placed a piece of bread about the size of a half a loaf and a cup of water inside

the door, emptied the excretion of the night, and another day began. In this place I spent the next eighteen days. In all that time I was denied the privilege of exercising, of seeing the sun, of even washing myself.

On the morning of the eighteenth day I was taken to the punishment room. I was stripped naked and whipped with forty lashes. A devilish mind invented this implement of torture. A strap about fourteen inches long and about fifteen inches at its widest part was affixed to a wooden handle, to give, as I once heard an officer say, more swing to it. To give it pliability it is kept in an oil solution; this is to keep the leather soft and prevent its breaking.

I had a dumb notion in my head that my punishment was about over with, but I was sadly mistaken. That noon I was ordered "on line" for thirty days. This "on line" punishment must have been devised by one inordinately brutal. There were certain hours at the school which were regarded as recreation time. If one were "on line," he walked in a circle about thirty feet in cir-

cumference during all that period of play. He was supposed to let his hands fall at his side, face square to the front, and in absolute silence. Of course this galled bitterly. The boy being punished by this method was in full view of the others and they of him; he saw them at their games, but could take no part in their pleasures. For myself I preferred the lockup to this.

In my later days at the school, when experience had toughened and much punishment hardened me, I refused to walk, and took the licking instead. There came a day when they even stopped licking me.

That experience, following the escape, pulled me down a little lower. I began to hate the society which maintained such an institution. I scoffed at the name "reform" and resolved to escape again. I soon did so, but the law reached out for me and brought me back. I tried again and again, but each time I was returned. The fourth time I managed to stay away for three long months. I had a unique experience after being returned this fourth time. All the

other times on my return to the institution after escaping, I was subjected to the usual punishment. On my return this time, however, I was brought immediately before the head of the institution. He spoke to me kindly of the uselessness of such escapes, and asked me to promise him that I would not attempt to escape again. Of course I promised him; I would have promised anything that he asked; but the promise was worth nothing. My nature had commenced to acquire the quality of hypocrisy and I had been punished enough to lead me to promise him anything.

He sent me back to my cottage with no words of reproof or smart of punishment. He thought to teach me the right road by kindness, to bring me to my senses by a little sympathy. But those virtues were too late coming into my life at the School. My nature had fallen too low to appreciate to the full such acts on the part of this official. That they made some impression on me is shown by the fact that for the following six months I surprised the boys and officials

alike by my becoming deportment. It didn't last: I was soon deep in a plot that seemed to make my freedom assured. The fear of physical suffering had no terrors for me. The day of the final attempt for liberty came, and that midnight saw a pal and me trudging a lonely country path on our way to a railroad station and the outside world.

Five miles from the school is situated a small village. Its inhabitants number about three hundred, devoted almost exclusively to the manufacture of tobacco sundries. We reached this village with hearts aglow and a song on our lips. Here was the railroad, and the railroad was to carry us over the line to the joys of the outside world. Suddenly from the side of the road came an avalanche of rushing forms. We tried to run, but were swept to the ground by the onslaught. We struggled and kicked and tore in an endeavor to throw our captors off. We were husky specimens of manhood, this pal and I, and we put up a fight, the memory of which will remain in that village for some few years. They finally mastered us, and

with pieces of hemp proceeded to tie us up, awaiting the arrival of school officials and monetary reward. You see, for the return of every escaped boy the State allows the captor the sum of five dollars. In the struggle between our captors and ourselves one of the former received a severe cut on the right arm, presumably done by some sharp instrument. After lying twenty-two days in the lockup for this last escapade I was arrested by the sheriff of the county for this alleged atrocious assault, as the warrant read. I can honestly say that that arrest was welcomed. I didn't know who had cut the man, my pal or I, or whether in the scrimmage he had been cut by one of his own friends, but, anyway, it was an opportunity to get away from the school, and this certainly was welcome.

CHAPTER VIII

LIFE IN PRISON

I WAS taken to the county seat wherein the assault took place, and lodged in jail. My experiences in this jail were similar to my first experiences in such a place. I found there the same indiscriminate mixing, regardless of age. Of course I was a bit more hardened in crime now, and I suppose the environment didn't have the same influence as it had much earlier in my career.

I was confined to the jail for about six weeks before I appeared before the judge and entered a plea of non vult to the indictment against me. This plea of non vult is a plea acknowledging one's guilt but mitigated by the fact that the offender meant no violation of the law.

The judge was lenient with me, and gave me the lightest sentence the statute would allow—one year in State prison. I received

this sentence with a sincere satisfaction. I knew it meant the end of the reform school for me. At the end of the prison sentence I was free to go again out into the world. By this time my mind had formed by association and environment a desire and determination to live entirely in the underworld. I would live by my wits; I would prey against society. With this determination I made every endeavor to learn the little tricks of the shadowy profession. I had not decided into which particular class of the underworld I should enter. There were certain classes I could hope to enter only by a severe apprenticeship. I left that for the time when opportunity should decide. However, I had made up my mind that into some phase of the life I would put all of my being.

In this state of mind I entered the principal prison of the State. I was eager for the opportunity to get in contact with some of the big men. I was confident of a ready welcome, and expected the ten months to prove a valuable asset to my after life.

CHAPTER IX

PRISON EXPERIENCES

THE State prison at that time was situated in the capital of the State. A collection of old and dilapidated buildings, expressive of the misery and the suffering inside, stood within sight of the capitol—a contrast of two extremes.

The idea of the construction of the buildings was good. There were four wings, each converging into a common center. From this center the guard could see all that took place in the several wings. In the center were the desks of the "P. K." and the center keeper. The P. K., so called by the men, had general supervision of the entire prison. In his hands was placed the discipline of the entire institution. His was the authority to order all punishment, responsible only to the warden.

At the time when I entered there were

none of the reforms now so common in most of the penal institutions of the country: stripes, the lockup, the clipped head, the "contract system" were in general vogue. There were no privileges to speak of. The prisoner was allowed to write but one letter a month. No newspapers were permitted to enter the institution. Pencils and writing paper were absolutely prohibited on pain of severe punishment. It was like a prison, one could imagine, that came up from the Dark Ages untouched by modern thought or usage.

The cells were of brick covered with the whitewash of many years. In this whitewash much vermin had nesting places, and it was a continual battle between the prisoner and the vermin from the time the former first entered the cell. The cells were about five by seven; the furniture was meager, consisting of an iron cot, a corn-husk mattress and pillow, a table that folded against the wall, and a small wooden stool. For covering, the prisoner was given a blanket. There were no electric lights or toilet conveniences.

Looking back over my experiences, I can say that the food was on about the average served in similar institutions—sometimes fair, occasionally good, and at other times very bad. It is an impossible task to please all the men in such an institution, an absurd endeavor even to try to please them. Convicts, as a rule, are chronic kickers. Serve them with ham and eggs for any reasonable time, mutterings of discontent would soon follow. Some officials seem to know this, and change the diet of the prisoner frequently. The same food served continuously soon becomes monotonous. Men lose their appetite, discontent poisons their nature, melancholy results, and trouble follows. If a change of food is made at intervals of the year, a better discipline is procured. That, at least, is my experience. If the prisoner is satisfied with his food, a better and more wholesome state of mind results, and, naturally, a better discipline follows.

The punishment as inflicted at this institution was never brutal. During my stay of over ten months I heard of no cuffings-

up, of no water cure, of no severe whippings, and of no manhandlings by the guards. Nevertheless, I found there the best discipline of any like institution I was ever in. As a general rule, the guards were of a little higher caste than the average.

In all such places political or personal pull amounts to a great deal. In this respect I found this institution no exception. This pull enables one to get the "cinch" positions. If one is well known and favorably thought of, it is an easy matter to reach the hospital or to "beat" the contract. Favoritism so practiced is the bane of all such institutions. It engenders the belief in the convict that it isn't the fact of his crime that counts, but its enormity. He sees the bank-wrecker, convicted of misappropriating the life savings of the poor, come to the prison with a paltry sentence of a few years. Though the sum stolen reaches into the thousands, the sentence is only a third or a fourth of his for a much smaller crime. He sees the big thief enjoying the run of the institution, with no contract work, or work in some

clerical position. The partiality breeds discontent and generates the poison of society hatred in the being of the minor criminal. The little crook tries to become a big crook, and in this manner the ranks of the underworld are further recruited.

The contract system in vogue at the institution was vicious to the extreme. It was the cause of most of the discontent found there. It was the source of all the numerous petty disturbances. Although I know of no prisoner being severely punished for non-completion of task assigned, I do know of punishment inflicted elsewhere. Most wardens say, if you ask them, that they expect but one half to one fourth of an outside man's output or ability. This assertion isn't worth the time taken to read it. I have found universally true in all prisons where the contract system is in force that the prisoner is expected and compelled to do the equal of an outside man's output, and in some cases more than that. I shall dwell more at length on this phase of the question in my later chapters.

On entering the institution, after bathing, having my hair clipped, and donning the red-and-white striped suit, I was sent to the receiving wing. Here the convicts are locked up until assigned to work. Each morning I was called to the door of my cell and stood for a close inspection of my physical capacity. My hands were examined for strength and pliability. I was made to bend my knees without touching hands to the floor. My mouth was inspected and heart tested. I was an animal being offered for sale to the highest bidder. My weight was asked and age investigated. Everyone seemed satisfied with my physical condition, but they failed to hire me because of my defective eyesight. Old-timers advised me to "beat the contract," to simulate a condition of the eyes, worse than they really were. I took the advice for what it was worth and played it to the limit. None of the contractors would have me. The doctor examined me thoroughly, and found me possessed of a bad case of myopia.

I was assigned to State work and did odd

jobs about the institution. I soon tired of this, however, and made application to be sent out on contract. I was assigned to the shoe contract, and began my work there by sewing buttons on women's shoes.

All my life I have been restless. The thought of staying at one position for any considerable time was enough in itself to make me long for a change. I played my sight against the position and won out. I was given work at polishing the bottoms of shoes. This suited me to a T. It was one of the cinch jobs of the contract, and I was mighty lucky to get it. It was my sight that got it, not I.

For an hour each day I could exercise in the yard, a privilege denied to those who worked. I stayed at this work until I left the institution, some six months later. When I did leave I knew about as much of the shoe business as I did when I started, and that was nothing at all. So much for the argument that the contract system is conducive to trade-learning.

The day finally came for my discharge.

I was dressed in a suit of shoddy material worth about five dollars. I was given the magnificent sum of four dollars and left to shift for myself. This brings to light another reason why so many men return to the underworld. They have been incarcerated for a long number of years. Friends and home are all gone. The money given them is soon used. There is no one to whom they can turn, so they return to the places where the criminals meet. It's not natural that they should starve, and they have too much pride to beg. They see an opportunity to get some easy money and they take the chance; the chance more than often proves a fall. Another step is thus taken in the making of the habitual criminal.

CHAPTER X

CRIMINAL CLASSES

THE professional criminal is a type little understood by the vast majority of people. Most people imagine him a type of man inherently and thoroughly vicious, with no saving grace in his character. The criminals I have known are not of this kind. Be it understood in writing of "professional" criminals that I mean the one known to the police as the professional man, the man who steals in some shape or another for a living, not the murderer or the ravisher, not the bigamist or the assaulter of women. These crimes are as foreign to the professional crook as they are to the average man.

The underworld can be divided into two principal classes, those of settled dispositions, preying in the locality in which they reside, and those whose methods take them

about the entire country and world. The former class is the less numerous. It is characterized by particularly petty acts. Working in the majority of cases under the protection of the police or some ward heeler, these men are seldom apprehended. In this class is found the petty "dip" (pickpocket), who makes the street cars and the markets his specialty. The confidence man who has seen better days, making his hangout in some second-class hotel, picking up a few pennies here and there with the connivance of the police, is another type. The receiver of stolen goods (a fence), with his little store as a blind, belongs to this group. Then there is the second-story man domiciled in some cheap lodging house, from whence he makes his nightly excursions into the realms of "chance." In the city residing from year to year is also found the "stool" (informer). The police, knowing them to be incapable of big work, allow them to prey within certain restrictions for the information they bring to them. The stool never or seldom leaves the city. His chances of returning would be

slight indeed if the fact were ever found out. The stool is a big asset to every police department. Through him the police are notified of the presence in town of any of the big men of the profession. Living in the underworld, he has means of getting advance information of some job to be pulled off. He does work for which he receives in pay the supposed friendship of the police. The petty tricks that he pulls off pass unnoticed. If, by any chance, he should find himself within the clutches of the law, his friendship with the police, in most cases, is sufficient to have the case against him dropped. Of course the stool is not known as such among his companions of the underworld. He remains a stool, pulsating with life, only because he is successful in blinding his pals to his hypocrisy.

In that class which makes the world its field are found the big men of the profession: the counterfeiter, not the maker of silver coin, but the fellows whose specialties are notes from a hundred up; the keen, quick-witted forger, the well-groomed and

affable "con man"; the bank thief, nimble and light of foot; the badger man and woman, heartless and cunning in their scheming. Among the rougher workers are found the yegg, nerveless and cool in the face of danger, the stick-up man, with his stealthy tread and ever-ready "rod," the "prowler" (burglar), and a host of others. In this class are found the "wanted" men of the profession. By railroad and boat they travel over the face of the earth. Living with their kind, ransacking the world in search of plunder, they live their life.

It's a life of chance, this life in the underworld. The crook plays with it daily, toys with it in his every endeavor. He has anticipated arrest for so many years that the actual culmination of his fears hasn't the shock in it which it would have otherwise.

CHAPTER XI

SOME TYPES OF CROOKS

THE "con man," the bank sneak, the counterfeiter (of notes) and his allies, the forger, the big dip, and the badger man are what might be called the aristocrats of the underworld because their work requires on their part always a polished exterior. A good "front" (appearance) in their line is essential to success.

The morning sun may see the criminal the acme of contentment, money in his pocket, a smile on his face; the evening shadows may fall on him pacing a cell in some detention house. Yet the crook takes the chance.

It's a peculiar characteristic of all crooks, that sooner or later they know they'll see the inside of a "stir" (prison). They realize that at the end of their road a prison waits for them with open arms. I believe it is

this fact which makes the crook so philosophical in defeat.

The "con man" is invariably a man of fine appearance, possessed of a better than ordinary education. He must have a personality to attract, a conversational ability to hold attention. They are invariably "good livers," used to the best, and are attracted only by large money. The big dip, the forger, and the bank thief are all men above the ordinary of the underworld.

At the head of all of them I would place the counterfeiter, the man whose mechanical ability and resourcefulness makes him a menace to the government. His work requires a technical training of many years. Cleaner than the average in mechanical skill, his is a profession envied by his lesser fellows.

Another type of the gentleman crook is the badger man—a sort of blackmailer, whose work is helped to its consummation by a woman companion. In this species of crime the woman is always the principal, the man but an accessory. It is a type requiring

a good appearance, the ability to assume certain emotions, such, for instance, as a wronged husband is supposed to have on viewing his wife in the company of another man. This type differs from the majority of crooks in that it is cold and heartless.

In the rougher class the yegg stands prominently at the top. Taking the place of the old bank burglar, he has proved one of the most feared and the most desperate of all crooks. His is a roving life entirely. Using the railroads of the country as a method of transportation, distance to him but lends enchantment. In the yegg class are found graduates of all the other criminal professions. I have known stick-up men and former dips, burglars and a former counterfeiter as members of different gangs. The class is exclusive, the members seldom fraternizing with the others of the underworld. There is a loyalty to each other found among the yeggs which is characteristic of them. In all of my experience I know of but one yegg turning a "squealer" (State witness) against his pals. Woe to

him if caught without the protection of the police. The yegg, unlike the gentlemanly types of the underworld, cares little for women. The illgotten gains are spent "slopping up" (getting drunk) in the jungles (outside the city) in the summer, or in some particular rendezvous of the city in the winter time. He never saves; his is the life of the present.

The stick-up man (hold-up), the burglar, and like, make up the other types, along with the bum, the tramp, and the hobo. I have often seen the bum, the tramp, and the hobo classed as one type of those fellows who love life better than they love work. As a matter of fact, each type is a class distinct in itself. The bum makes his residence, if it can be rightly called residence, exclusively in towns and cities; he never leaves them. He never works, and stands the lowest in the life of the other half. The tramp is a mixture of thief, mendicant, and loafer. He will never work; the genuine tramp excludes from his society those who ever do work. If he is ever required to work in return for a meal,

he forfeits the meal rather than to soil his reputation by labor. He steals when opportunity offers, and begs when he gets the chance. He differs from the yegg, in that his life is not entirely devoted to crime. From the ranks of the tramp the society of yeggs is sometimes recruited; from the bum, never. The hobo differs from both in the respect that he works occasionally, and seldom steals. Roaming about the country, working here and there in railroad and lumber camps, and canneries, his traveling is always to a destination. A stake is made and he and his pals go to the city for a spree. The money spent, he is back again on the railroad looking toward a job.

In the spring, when the warm sun begins to kiss the green into the grasses, the tramp stretches his frame and listens. He hears the call of the road, and his nature hearkens thereto. Soon the railroads know him, and the farmers feel the weight of his appetite. It's a care-free life these tramps live. Living in the present, without responsibility, they go their way until death claims them.

CHAPTER XII

MORALS IN THE UNDERWORLD

I LEFT the prison with my moral sense warped and twisted. I do not mean to say that I had lost the faculty of differentiating between right and wrong entirely. No, not that, but association with debased natures and the influence of vicious environment had combined to break down my sense of moral values. Things which I had been taught to abhor as contaminating to health and morals I found myself looking at with complacent eyes.

Some few persons have asked me whether before the commission of a crime the man does not think of the right or wrong of it. I have answered them that he does not, that the question of morality never enters into the mind of the crook. Of course, if you could stop a crook immediately before the commission of his act and ask him if he

didn't know the act to be wrong, generally speaking, he would answer, "Yes." He would answer thus because the morality of the thing would be put square before him. Lacking the reminders, it is safe to say that he never does.

The professional crook is a difficult problem to handle, when looking toward a reformation. Years of living without the necessity of labor have made him unsuited to a great many occupations, and this, coupled with the fact that a great many are without trades, makes it a problem which only the wise can handle.

I know there are a great many people in this world with just the best of intentions toward this class of men. They are interested in social work, they have a heart swelling with sympathy, and hands eager to help lift the load, but they lack understanding. I know a fellow helped toward hell by a man of good intentions. Men have been pauperized by sympathy. The lazy are ever ready for some one else to bear their load. It takes more than good intentions, more

than sympathy, more than a readiness to help, to make a reformation in the character of the crook. The man who seeks to reclaim these men (I say man because I know of only one woman ever successful in this effort—Mrs. Ballington Booth) must first of all understand them. He must know life as it is, not as he thinks it is. He must have as his patron saint the virtue patience; absolutely he must be an optimist, yet not a visionary; he must be gentle, yet strong, acting absolutely on the square toward the man he fain would reclaim. He must be religious. Not a conventional churchgoer. No, he must be more than that. His religion must emanate from his personality. Creed must be subdued, sectarianism must give place to brotherhood. Even these qualifications do not necessarily mean success. As no man of the underworld is like his fellow, different methods will need to be followed in the effort to reclaim them. I have outlined the fundamentals essential to even a partial success in this line. The opportunities for good are beyond number.

CHAPTER XIII

SYSTEMATIC LAWLESSNESS

Soon after leaving prison I fell in with an old "stir" (prison) acquaintance. He was an older man than I was, wise as to the methods of the underworld, and cunning in crime. He proposed a partnership. I agreed, and the following three years we wandered together over a good portion of the world. We visited the larger cities of Europe, matching our wits against the police, and, as luck would have it, always making a clean getaway. Of course we did no big work. Ours was of a petty nature.

Tiring of the Continent, we drifted back to the States, wandering from one to another. The pickings from promiscuous work became poor, and we decided to systematize our further efforts. Looking about for easy graft, we decided "working the rattlers" looked the most promising. "Working the

rattler" is a term applied by the underworld to denote the robbing of freight trains, generally in transit. We organized a gang of four men as active workers. It was no trouble to find men in different cities, eager and anxious to take off our hands what booty we might happen to get. Right here I want to say that it would no doubt create some surprise to some people to know the identity of those very "fences." Of course it is impossible for me here to mention names, but I will say that among the men to whom we regularly sold our stuff were found some of the solid men of the community, both financially and socially. The nature of the "fence" is essentially selfish. Knowing the origin of the goods to be sold, he offers an absurd sum for them. The crook may at first hesitate, but finally accedes to the bargain. The majority of "fences" I found were crooked, even to the crooks themselves. The men know this, yet still continue to deal with him. One of the paradoxes of the underworld is this pertinent fact: that notwithstanding the known repu-

tation of a "fence" for crookedness, the thief will still continue to deal with him. The "fence," as a rule, looks to his own welfare first. If the police happen to "get the goods" on him, and offer as an inducement the safety of himself, the "fence" will usually give the information sought by the police. He thinks nothing of turning "State's evidence," providing his liberty is assured him.

Another peculiarity of the crooks is their habit of congregating in the city in some rendezvous of the underworld, known to the police as such. Ask any police head if such places exist, and he will tell you that they do. Notwithstanding this surveillance of the police, the crook still continues to make it his resort until he leaves, no more to return for a period of years.

"Working the rattlers" proved a well-paying proposition. Our method of work was systematized to an extent little dreamed of by the mediocre guardians of the road. Night was the time of operation. We would wait at a division point on the railroad for a train loaded with merchandise to pull out.

Two of us would enter the car after breaking the seal. The two would then be locked in, the car resealed, and the remaining two would ride on the train itself to our prearranged point of debarkation.

Once inside, the two would search the car for easy marketable products. These would be packed in bags, the bags tied and packed at the door for easy egress. A merchandise train is generally what is called a through train, that is, it seldom stops between divisions, unless it does so for water. Just before our agreed place for debarkation one of the outside men, by the aid of a rope ladder, would slip over the side of the car, break the seal and open the door. The goods would then be thrown out, and a little further down the road, we ourselves would alight. The goods would then be placed in a wagon and driven to a house already rented for the purpose. Here the stuff would be assorted, packed and shipped to different "fences," according to their needs. I myself generally followed the shipment and collected our due.

The plan worked well through a year. The railroads were becoming harassed by our depredations. Police were sent to guard the very trains upon which our efforts were centered, but with no marked avail. The losses still went on. All "good things," through one cause or another, eventually come to an end. Ours came too.

I remember the day of my arrest like the dawn of yesterday. It was on a Sunday noon, in the early summer. One of my pals and I had arranged to take our girls that afternoon to a nearby resort. We had left our hotel and walked to the corner and stood waiting for a car. The car came and stopped, and just as we were about to get on, two men in the blue uniforms of the police laid their hands on our arms and informed us that the captain would like to see us for a moment. Of course I knew instantly that the end had come, yet I was curious to know through what source of information our arrest had been brought about.

CHAPTER XIV

BETRAYAL AND ARREST

THE Saturday preceding the Sunday of my arrest was one of rain. I was reading in my room when a knock sounded at my door; I opened it and found one of my acquaintances of the underworld standing there. He also was "working the rattlers," but on a much smaller scale than I. I invited him inside, and in the course of our conversation he mentioned the fact that he had a gross of Stetson hats which he was anxious for me to dispose of for him. The proceeds of the sale he told me were to go to procure a "mouthpiece" (a lawyer), to secure the release of his pal by habeas corpus proceedings. I told him I thought I could do as he desired, and asked him the whereabouts of the hats. It seems that they were at that time hidden out in the woods

on the outskirts of the city. The stuff was too much for him to handle at once, so he came to me. Our reputation in the underworld was such at that time that I frequently performed the same services for other gangs.

One day, several weeks before this incident of the hats occurred, a young fellow whom I knew kept a "fence," but with whom I had never dealt, performed a service worth while for me and asked me to remember him when anything "good" came off. On numerous occasions, in appreciation of his act, I had sent him gifts of various things, such as cloth for suits, socks, and a general run of men's furnishings and the like. He continued to remind me of my promise to let him get in on a "good thing." I thought of him the first thing when the question of the disposal of the hats was brought up, and in a minute or so I had him on the phone. I told him that there were about a gross of the hats and asked fifty cents per hat for them. He was pleased immensely and we struck a bargain right off. So eager was he for them that he offered

to furnish the horse and wagon to carry the stuff off.

About 2 P. M. that day three of us in the wagon went to the place where the hats were hidden. He was delighted with his find, immediately paid me the money, and drove off with his hats. Forty minutes after leaving us he drove up to the police headquarters—wagon, hats, and himself. Unknown to us, the police had used him as a stool, threatening him with some minor act of his. I think it is Burns who says something to the effect that the best laid plans of men oft go astray. We had guarded ourselves against foes from without, but had neglected to watch those from within our own ranks.

Immediately upon our arrest the police of the different railroads became active. Every theft ever committed from these same roads was laid at our door. Goods were found in several warehouses which upon examination were found to have been stolen in transit. The woods were searched thoroughly and several caches of goods found. Fences whom I had never heard

of, let alone dealt with, hurried to identify us. A guilty conscience anticipates disaster long before its actual consummation. The fences caught with the goods from other parties saw a chance to square themselves by identifying us as the culprits. The fact that we were innocent of that particular act made no difference with them. The doors of the prison were opened, ready to swing shut on their backs. The police offered to square their case if they appeared against us. They, of course, appeared.

The case of the police against us was not as absolute as they and we thought. A few weeks after our arrest the fence from whom the information came, becoming alarmed by rumors that friends of ours were out to "get" (kill or injure) him, skipped the State and left the prosecuting attorney in a quandary. Without the evidence of the fence a successful prosecution against us was impossible. The evidence in other cases soon proved to be the testimony of the fence against ours. After lying in jail for eight months, with the consent of

the railroads, and on our promise to return certain goods in our possession, they agreed to free us. We consented and once again walked the street as free men. After passing through this experience, we decided that any future work in this line would be extra hazardous and the gang dispersed.

CHAPTER XV

PECULIARITIES OF "YEGGS"

One night as a group of us lolled about a camp fire I was asked to join a gang of yeggs then about to start out on a trip. I accepted the invitation, and the following two years saw me risking life and liberty in the most dangerous of all the underworld pursuits. The life of a yegg is a life of stirring adventures. In the majority of cases each crime means a fight for a getaway. The yegg keeps to his class and is a strict observer of caste. He hates work as he hates the police, and carries his hatred further to those who do work. The yegg is a rough worker and dresses in the jungles (outside the city) to suit his calling. His greatest passion is drink; he will "slop up" (get drunk) whenever the opportunity is offered, except, of course, in the immediate

pursuit of some easy money. Unlike the dip (pickpocket) who has a "skirt" (woman) always near him, the yegg seldom bothers about them. His recreation is gotten from the state of mind which alcohol produces. He lives in the present and cares not a cent what the morrow may bring forth.

Yeggs, as a class, have certain characteristics differentiating them from the rest of the underworld. Loyalty to one another is preeminent in their make-up. Though the yegg has been known to kill in making his getaway, he never degenerates to the cruelty of the stick-up man. He never tortures, nor do I know of any guilty of crimes against womanhood. On the other hand, if a life should stand between him and liberty, he would unhesitatingly take that life. I know of no instance where a life has been taken simply because that life stood between the yegg and money.

To cite an instance of the loyalty of the yegg, I will recount an incident that I know of intimately.

In a small village of one of the Eastern

States was a store owned by one of the prominent men of the town. In connection with the store, and in the same building, was the only bank in the town. Over the bank one of the employees always slept. One night in the late winter a gang of yeggs descended upon the village and attacked the bank. They found little difficulty in forcing an entrance and inserting enough "soup" (nitro glycerine) to throw open the door at the first "shot" (explosion). There was an inner door, however, and they went back into the building to insert another charge. In the meantime the employee of the bank, sleeping overhead, was awakened by the first explosion. With more nerve than sense, he grabbed a shotgun, inserted two shells, and noiselessly slipped down the stairs to investigate. At about this time the yeggs were returning for the second shot and they met the employee just at the threshold. The employee shot at the foremost of the yeggs, both barrels throwing their load of lead through the yegg's right arm, just beneath the shoulder. The arm

was nearly severed and the yegg lay stunned on the floor. The rest of the gang took the recumbent form of their pal in their arms and after stopping at a safe distance to give what succor they could, carried him in the face of pursuit for fourteen miles. Twice they were caught up with by the following posses and as many times they eluded them. They eventually escaped altogether. The wounded yegg lost his arm, but not his liberty. There are many such instances of loyalty to clan in the history of the yegg life.

CHAPTER XVI

CONCERNING PRISON MANAGEMENT

DURING my career as a yegg I was arrested four times and stood trial in two of the cases and "beat" (was acquitted in) both. One case never came to trial, the other one brought me a State prison sentence of fifteen years. The crime was blowing open a safe from which we failed to secure a single penny. Such is the life of a yegg. I heard that sentence of fifteen years pronounced upon me with a feeling mixed with contempt and hatred. I hated society, I was antagonistic to religion, and the sentence of fifteen years but aggravated both. I pictured the bank thief, the respectable crook getting away with the savings of widows and children, with his paltry three years' punishment. I saw the seducer of

chaste women come off the stand with a mere sentence of months. The pictures intensified my hatred and I entered prison to begin my sentence, a criminal in mind and nature.

Dante once wrote that he found this inscription over the doors of hell: "Abandon hope all ye who enter here." This describes to a nicety the prison in which I was confined for nearly eight years. Over the thousand and one prisoners, a warden of the old school of penology presided. He was one who believed in and practiced the adage, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." Yes, he even went further than that. He was a man of undoubted executive ability. He would have made an ideal head of some corporation where the question of men's souls and bodies never entered into consideration. You could have searched the world to find one less worthy to be at the head of an institution of this kind.

A saloon keeper, he had found the friendship of one politically high and secured the position. With the odor of his calling still upon him he came from behind his bar to sit

in the office of the warden. He had the life and liberty, the responsibility of a thousand men under his care. For over twenty years he guarded the destiny of this institution. He was the enemy of every reform ever initiated. He refused to let outside men or women interest themselves in the cause of the prisoner. He made rules of unusual severity and punished cruelly any infraction. In this prison the contract system of employing prisoners was in use, and the warden was ever the friend of the contractor. He was eventually found guilty of grafting by a committee of investigation, and shortly before the verdict of these men resigned his office.

CHAPTER XVII

MISTAKES OF A CHAPLAIN

One of the surprises of my life I received here in this same institution. It was a disappointment as well as a surprise. It was in the character of the chaplain—a minister of the gospel. This professed follower of the Nazarene was as little a Christian as I. The official above all others who should obtain the confidence of the prisoners was the man most detested by them. This dislike on the part of the men was well founded. He was sectarian rather than Christian, and hostile to all creeds other than his own. His insincerity was evident from his daily life. I have heard him preach on the blessings of poverty with three rings on his fingers, his gold watch lying open on the table before him, and a ruby throwing scintillating rays from its resting place in his neck scarf.

A prisoner in the last stages of tuberculosis once sent for him. The chaplain came to his bedside some few days later. The prisoner was weak and exhausted from much coughing. The chaplain looked down on him and asked in a voice toned with disapproval, "Well, what do you want with me?" The prisoner whispered that he would like him to pray with him. "It's too late for that," the chaplain answered as he turned from the bedside. Some few days after the man died.

The duties of the chaplain consisted of opening and reading the letters sent and received by the prisoners, and preaching and praying on Sundays. We think the Master paid scant attention to *his* prayers.

The personality of the warden had contaminated the characters of his underlings with few exceptions. The guards were unsuited to their positions and held them only by reason of political influence. Like a flower standing amid a great expanse of tares and thistles stood one man in this institution. He held at that time the position

of assistant warden, and I ever found him square and decent. It was due to him in no small measure when the prisoners enjoyed any privileges. He leaned ever on the side of the man, always human and ready to do a favor.

CHAPTER XVIII

CONTRACT LABOR

THE question of what to do with the prisoner during the period of his confinement has always been a difficult one. The system of leasing the labor of the prisoner to the highest bidder, up to a few years ago, was common in the different States. It was an easy solution to an intricate problem, and the State, looking only at the present, gave its assent to the method. It is a system particularly slavish in its workings, dehumanizing to the men working under it, and the source of most of the brutality found in penal institutions.

In the prison where I was, the contractor paid the large sum of fifty-five cents for the labor of each man per day. This sum included rent, heat, power, and insurance on the building. The product turned out entered into competition with the product of

free labor, having the tendency to lower the price of the competing article, and, in turn, lowering the wage of the free laborer. All this is done not for the good of society at large, but for the particular aggrandizement of a few individuals. These individuals, in most cases, come into the State from the outside; they pay no taxes and bring into the State no assets beneficial to the people at large. They engage this contract labor at insignificant prices, and force the product of this labor on the free market. This in itself is unfair to the employer of free labor who brings into the State assets beneficial to all. The latter pays taxes and contributes toward the upkeep of the State. His manufactory attracts laborers who eventually become citizens. His weekly pay roll spreads and makes itself felt among numerous businesses, which in turn also contribute toward the support of the State and city. On the face of it, is it not manifestly unfair to the employer of free men to be forced to compete with the product of the prison contractor?

This is only the economic side of the question. The moral side of it is seen in the fact that the system tends to debauch all those who come in contact with it. It dehumanizes the prisoners, leaving them without hope or reward. It hardens the sensibilities of the guards watching over them. Wherever the system is in vogue there will be found brutality rampant. If the prisoner is unable to do his allotted task, punishment is resorted to to force him.

Wardens of all such institutions will tell you that the tasks assigned to the prisoner are much less than the average product of the free laborer, but I have found it universally true that the tasks assigned equal, and in some cases exceed the output of the free man. The prisoner is given thirty days to become proficient in his work. After that time he is expected to do his task each day. For the first lapse he will be warned, for the second a light punishment will be given him. If he continues unable to perform it, some severe punishment is meted out to him. For instance, I have seen a prisoner strung

up by his thumbs for the noncompletion of the task, and left this way for a period of three hours. Can you imagine the feelings of this man toward society and the State after going through this experience?

The prison in which I spent my last confinement was unique among contract-labor prisons. In this one the prisoner was at least given a chance to earn a little money for his own use. Not all, but there were a few among the many who were able, by heartrending toil, to do a little over their daily task. For this overwork the prisoner was paid by the contractor at the prevailing rates, fifty-five cents a task. The amount of money earned by the man would average about three dollars a month. Of course a great many of the men would earn absolutely nothing. A few earned a sum exceeding the average. This same overwork money has been the stumbling-block to the institution of any reforms in this same prison. Any criticism leveled at the institution itself or the system in vogue at the prison, would be met by bringing forth these

same overtime earnings. The sum in the aggregate appeared large, but to one wise in the law of averages the amount shown but proved its insignificance. From the books of this same institution it has been shown that the average amount taken out by the men discharged has been under two dollars. What a munificent sum with which to begin a new life!

I believe it is Emerson who says "that every institution is but the lengthened shadow of a single man." This prison proved the assertion of the sage. I shall call the warden Thomas, for that is as far from his real name as any I can think of. His later years have been touched by a great deal of sorrow, and I am not inclined to burden his remaining days with a constant repetition of his shortcomings. I have mentioned the fact before that he was possessed of an executive ability of a high order. The institution was run like clockwork. Like cogs well turned to an exact fit, every wheel of the prison worked without jar or lost motion. He was distant from

both the guard and the prisoner. His every effort was bent to the turning over to the State of a surplus, which he did yearly. The food served to the inmates was of a type both poor in quality and deficient in quantity. I have come away from the table on many occasions hungry. The washing of our clothes was never rightly done. The warden knew the soap cost money. We were allowed two ounces of soap for ourselves once a month; if that were not sufficient for our use, of course we had the privilege of buying it ourselves. Imagine two ounces of soap lasting a man a month?

Gladstone said that he could tell the civilization of a nation by the amount of soap its inhabitants used. Imagine yourself the civilization made possible by this warden.

The State was supposed to clothe the men in its prisons. In this one, however, most of the men clothed themselves. Outside of the suit of stripes it was usual for all of us to provide for our own wearing apparel. We also paid for our shaves and haircuts. We could have worn the ill-smelling clothes the

State handed out to us if we had desired. But payment for our haircut was absolutely imperative. If we failed to pay, we went shorn of hirsute adornment. Of course all of this went toward adding to the yearly surplus of the warden.

Another instance of the viciousness of the contract system was that it kept the prisoner confined long after his sentence expired. There were a certain number of days allowed off a sentence for good behavior. Each prisoner was an asset to the contractor. It was a question of dollars and cents with him. If the man nearing the completion of the sentence happened to fall short of his task or to transgress one of the many rules of the institution, time would be added to his sentence. That is, a part of his good time. In my confinement of over seven years I found it a rare occasion for any man to be turned out at the completion of his good time. Of course this but put into the minds of the prisoners the thought that the prison was run for the special benefit of the prison contractor. I know absolutely that a contractor

asked the warden to hold a certain man beyond his good time, and the warden did it. You may say that such an instance would not happen with every warden. It is not the fact that it happens that makes the system so outrageous, but the fact that it can happen.

The physician of this prison for seventeen years had trouble with the warden about excusing men unable to perform their work. The warden wanted them in their shops; he said that what they needed was not so much a doctor as a club. The physician, supposing that he knew his calling, disagreed with the warden and brought the matter to the attention of the Board of Directors. The Board sided with the warden, and the physician lost his place. This man then went before the State medical board and charged the warden with no less than murder. The press of the State, instead of demanding an investigation, almost without exception characterized the charge as absurd. They charged, and perhaps charged rightly, that if such abuses existed in a prison in the

time of this incumbency, it was his duty to begin to inform the people at that time, not to wait till he had been ousted from his place, to begin. Some few months after this incident a man was appointed as guard from one of the southern counties. On his first day of work he was directed by the warden to string up a prisoner for some minor infraction of the rules. He refused. Another guard willingly did the work, the former guard witnessing the punishment. The sight of the brutality so sickened him that he then and there handed in his resignation. He informed one of the papers of the city in which the prison was situated, and this paper began a quiet investigation of the fact. Numerous discharged prisoners told of their experiences, former guards supplemented this testimony. The press of the State took notice, some of them demanding an investigation from the governor. In the meantime the Board of Directors of the prison met and exonerated the warden of all the charges laid against him. Finally the governor did appoint a commission to

investigate and they began work immediately. This committee found the warden guilty of petty grafting, of brutal treatment of the prisoners under him, and recommended the abolition of the contract-labor system. A few months before the rendering of this verdict the warden resigned.

CHAPTER XIX

PARDONED

My sentence had been for a period of fifteen years. Allowing for a commutation for good conduct of two years and six months, I would still have to serve twelve years and six months. Looking ahead, the end of that period seemed long in the future. I did not dare to dwell on my time. Constant brooding over their misfortune is what sends so many prisoners to the insane asylum. I tried to spend my time in much reading and a little writing, yet the time seemed endlessly long. From five on a Saturday afternoon to six on Monday morning I was locked in my cell. The ventilation was poor, as I have found it so in all such places. The warden had once told me that it would do me no good to go to church, and I seldom went. The character of the

chaplain had alienated me from thoughts of religion and I drifted into the philosophy of the atheist. I read the books of the so-called freethinkers, and in the reading assimilated some of their teachings. I took much pains that my pals in the prison should know where I stood in this matter of religion, and I was soon known among them as an atheist of the first water. Strange to say, among the men in the different prisons of my experience, I have seldom found an out-and-out atheist. The great majority of them believe, and believe strongly, in their Creator. It is one of the paradoxes of their nature. I am glad to say that I myself am no exception.

One day there happened to fall into my hands an announcement of a poetry contest that a certain newspaper was about to begin. I thought, that possessing a little ability along these lines, I would try for the prize of twenty-five dollars offered for the best verse. It was a contest wherein the verse offered should show the value of the want ads of the particular paper. I wrote a

doggerel and sent my effort to the paper. Some few days after, I received the welcome news that my verse had won the prize. By reason of this there came into my life two friendships that have molded my career into straight and legitimate channels.

One of these men, to whom I am directly indebted to my liberty at this moment, noticed my effort in the paper and came over to see me. I at first hesitated to meet him. I wanted no friendships, I thought, from men of the outside world. You see my nature had been so deadened by my method of living that I wanted no companionship except that coming from men of my own class. I knew the common type of the reformer and wanted no dealings with men of that kind. I finally consented to see him. His type of mind and sensible methods soon appealed to me. We saw each other frequently and corresponded. In time he brought me my pardon. There is a big spot in my heart for him.

My other friend is a minister. I have always been a little shy on meeting preachers

of the gospel. Why I do not know. But there was always something in my make-up that ever made me lukewarm toward men of that class. I had this against ministers, that the most of them whom I had met lacked, for want of a better term, the strong masculine personality all real men should possess. They appeared to me to have a sort of sticky sense of goodness about them that seems unreal for men of this life to have. They left the impression of feminism upon me. I have thought, too, somehow, that the minister of the present does not know life as it really is, that he spends too much of his time in preaching and too little in doing. Of course I believe that as a class they are all doing all they can toward a betterment of social and industrial life, but I would rather they took their facts from life than from books.

Have you ever met a man whose talk with you has left the impression that it is a good thing, after all, to live? Such an impression did I receive from my first talk with this minister. A man with masculinity

written all over him; a man of strong convictions, yet possessed of a nature as broad as the Atlantic. He knows life as it is, not as it is written of. A true follower of the majestic Christ, he takes his religion seriously, and as of the seven-days-a-week kind, never happier than when he is serving some one else. He has impressed me always as a friend to tie to.

CHAPTER XX

DIFFICULTIES OF THE EX-PRISONER

I LEFT prison with the determination to make good. Association and correspondence with my two friends had brought to me the full realization of the folly of the other life. As the doors of the prison closed after me, and I stood upon the threshold of the new life, a feeling came over me that is difficult to describe in mere words.

It was my first glimpse of the outside world in over seven years. During that time the range of my vision had been narrowed by huge walls of stone. My eyes were unaccustomed to a broader landscape. As I stood on the steps of the prison for a moment, breathing in the atmosphere of an early June morning, the thought came to me that it was a pretty good world to live in, after all.

In the city of my confinement an association devoted to the interests of the discharged prisoner kept a "home." In this "home" the discharged prisoner could find food and shelter until able to procure work. On the eventful morning of my release from prison, as I walked toward this "home," my whole being was a-tingle with the gladness of the day. Here I was, a free man after a confinement of weary years. Can you imagine how happy I was? The activities of the city's streets bewildered me. I felt lost somehow, an atom as it were, in the life of the big world. I was struck by the great change in the dress of women. All about me seemed new. I walked, and walked, and walked still further until my feet were blistered with walking. A peculiarity of the discharged prisoner is the fact that he either walks or talks until almost exhausted, immediately upon his release.

In this age of progress much happens in a space of seven years. You must remember that I was as absolutely cut away from the world as if I had been in some distant planet,

receiving the news of the world through the columns of an aerial press.

I stayed for about five weeks in this "home." While I found a sincere desire on the part of the officials to make one at home, the place itself was too much institutionalized for them to succeed. That to me is the fault of the "homes" devoted to the interests of the discharged prisoner. The man coming out of prison should be made to forget such a thing as an institution. To step out of a place where rule and routine are the fundamentals, and enter again into the same environment under the guise of a "home" is a discouraging feature to the man bent on turning over a new leaf. Of course I realize that in such a place, devoted to such a work, certain rules and regulations are necessary. But they should be as few as is consistent with a proper maintenance of discipline.

As a matter of fact this "home" idea, to my mind at least, is not such a potent factor in the reformation of the prisoner as some believe it. In the first place, only a certain type of discharged prisoner cares to enter

such a home. No matter where the home is situated it soon becomes known for what it really is. Neighbors look upon the men residing there either pityingly or with contempt. It advertises the "past" of the man, and no sensitive man desirous of regenerating himself, cares to have the fact of his former delinquency become household knowledge.

Another factor against the "home" is this, that it gathers together a group of men of known criminal tendencies. Each man is making the fight for himself. There come moments of despondency and gloom. In that moment a suggestion of another in the same frame of mind may precipitate the fall of both. Instead of only one falling there may be more.

Folks will call this a destructive criticism, yet I do not mean it so. In place of the "homes" as at present conducted, I would place the discharged prisoners in private homes. Surely, there are people big enough, and with mind broad enough to give the man a chance? The associations would find little

trouble in finding such homes. Of course I realize that there is a certain type of man to whom the "home" as at present conducted is the ideal thing. But for the majority I would suggest my private-family idea. The discharged prisoner makes an almost hopeless fight for regeneration unless he has a friend of the Big Brother type to fall back on in times of despondency and gloom. In the private family he would have the advice and counsel of a friend. In the environment, colored by love, he would get glimpses of the happiness to be derived from an honest life. All this would be as a spur to his endeavors, for the thing the prisoner needs most of all is simply friendship. It must be friendship that is active and optimistic, a friendship that is not discouraged by an occasional failure. If the ex-prisoner can get this on leaving prison, his chances for making good are increased a hundredfold.

CHAPTER XXI

REFORMATION

THE underworld weaves about its citizens a sort of magic spell. I little thought, determined as I was to lead a different life, that I would ever again listen to its call. But I underestimated its influence over me. I had been out some seven or eight weeks when in company with a "stir" (prison) acquaintance I took to the road again. A fast freight took us away from the city back again toward the shadows of the underworld. I stopped just short of its boundaries. We lay the following evening in the "jungles" (outside the city) waiting to continue our journey. The train was late in coming and to while away the time I took some letters from my pocket and began to read them. They were old letters, one from my friend the minister, and another from my pal in

prison. They were letters such as an old and true friend would write to one in trouble. They were so proud of the fight I was making; they knew that I would succeed in my endeavor to make good. They were anxious for the time when I could once again hold up my head with the rest of them. I read the letters and then I re-read them. As I did so I realized the folly of the course that I was taking. The call of the road I found was not as inviting as I had supposed. The road itself lost its magic. The underworld ceased to beckon. I was sincerely unhappy. I saw the two lives from the right angle, and the life of the shadows was not for me. I determined to go back. To show them, my friends, that I was not unappreciative of their friendships, I resolved to make the fight at any cost and win out.

I found a right royal welcome awaiting me. I got back into the fight, and while meeting with occasional disappointments, made some progress. I have been on the outside now for over two years, and I can say that in that time I have never lapsed in

my endeavors. I have congenial employment, and am happy doing it. I have met the *one* girl, and my friend, the minister, made us one. I am happier now than I have ever been before.

CHAPTER XXII

COMPARISONS

In contrasting my life of the present with that of the underworld I am struck by the similar characters inhabiting both. The men of the underworld are little different from those living a legitimate life. They are possessed of the same emotions. They work and love with the same intensity of purpose as do their brothers of the moral life. They have their ideals too. Strip the thief of his propensity to steal, and you develop a character of genuinely wholesome quality. The idea that the denizen of the underworld is a character different from the rest of society is a fallacious one. Lombroso, from his scientific deductions, may tell you that the criminal is one of a distinct class, differentiated from the rest of mankind. But I say to you, out of an

experience of over seventeen years, that the peculiar conformation of an ear isn't necessarily a sign of criminal depravity. I know the men of whom I speak. I know their strength and some of their weaknesses. I know their vices and some of their virtues. In the life of the elect I have never met an angel; in the underworld I have yet to meet a man absolutely bad.

The great fact in the formation of criminal tendencies, to my mind at least, is environment. If this is so, then the society is in part responsible for the crime existing. A vast number of folks believe that the criminal is born so. They point to the son or daughter of criminal and vicious parents as proof of their reasoning. But when they do so they forget the force of the environment surrounding the child from its birth. That to me is the essential factor. I know a son of a thief who developed into a professional man of no mean standing. Why? Because at an early date he was adopted into the home of respectable and honest folk. In this environment, colored

by love, he developed those faculties which afterward made him succeed. I can understand certain physical characteristics being transmitted to the children, but for the life of me I cannot understand the transmission of thought. And morality to me is nothing if not a condition of the mind.

The factors partial to viciousness and crime are many. There are the great economic factors, such as insufficiency of work and lack of wage. Both are conducive to poverty and mendicancy, which in themselves are productive of an adverse environment. The slums exist mainly because of some error in the economic laws of the land. By reason of the slums other factors are produced, all fundamental in the production of crime.

It has been the universal rule in making up statistics of crime to place drink as the fundamental *cause* of most of it. Rather than being the great *cause* I am inclined to think that it is the great *excuse* of the criminal world. Every man convicted of error naturally endeavors to "excuse" that error.

And what better excuse or palliative is there than drink? It has gotten to be a habit with some people to look upon drink as indeed an honest excuse. No one knows this better than the criminal, and in giving drink as the cause of his falling he but follows the rule of the natural man.

I do not believe drink to be that great cause of crime which it is reported to be. Of course all drinking men are not criminals, yet neither are all criminals drinking men. Indirectly, though, drink is a big cause. The environment of the saloon, rather than drink itself, is what strikes me as being the great factor in producing the criminal. The saloons exist by reason of the permission of the State, and by reason of this fact the State stands responsible for a good part of the crime committed as a result of the saloon's influence.

It would be impossible, as it would be useless for me to endeavor to indicate all the causes that produce crime. In my mind the center of the evil is reached, and promising work is done when we look toward a

betterment of social conditions in the slums and poverty-stricken districts of the city. Reforms made here will soon make themselves felt in other areas. It is Utopian to believe that crime will ever be entirely obliterated in this life. Even believing this as true, the fact remains that by right methods, and human understanding, a considerable part of the underworld can be brought to see the Light.

CHAPTER XXIII

A PLEA FOR DISCHARGED PRISONERS

I WOULD fain, before concluding this story, lay before my readers the cause of the discharged prisoner. I would ask the world to take him on his promise once again. If not to forgive, I would ask that you forget. The road to regeneration is strewn with many obstacles. The man leaving prison doesn't know all of the pitfalls waiting for him. He imagines it easy to break away from the old life and start straight again. But I know better. I know the pull of the old life. I know the magic spell it weaves about one; and, friends, the way *is* hard. I've heard the call of the *road,* seductive with its melody. I know how it pulls and tugs at the very heartstrings of a man. There's a magic in the underworld, with its

lights and shadows, hard to comprehend. There's a glamour in the life like the interest of an old romance. I know the fight ahead of all the men starting out on the straight road, and I would ask that you in some way make it a little easier for them. A smile isn't much, an encouraging word goes a long way. They all help, they all lift the man a little nearer to the summit of his desire. In your own way you can be of inestimable help in the making of a *man*. Will you do your part?

Formerly the man behind the bars didn't count. You locked him up and threw away the keys. When his time was up you sent him out into the world with not a care for his future. Why should you care? Why worry of the road the convict took? The law was vindicated in his punishment. The law would be waiting his next criminal act. But all this was some time ago. Now a new order of things is come to your keeping. Across the nation an era of good will toward the prisoner is sweeping. Understanding of his position is rapidly being brought

about. People are more and more willing to give him a chance. Eager hands are outstretched, ready to help him over the rough places of the road. Big minds are taking hold of the problem. A spirit of true religion is being incorporated into the methods of the social worker. But, best of all, waiting for the man desirous of turning his back on the past, is the glad hand of true brotherhood.

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